

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RANGOO 01678 101037Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 AID-05 /100 W
-----058770 101251Z /43

R 100845Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5363
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL MANDALAY POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, BM, BG
SUBJ: BANGLADESH-BURMA BORDER PROBLEM

REF: RANGOON 1621 AND PREVIOUS

1. RATHER BELATEDLY STEPPING UP THE WAR OF WORDS, THE
RANGOON PRESS MAY 10 CARRIED FURTHER STATEMENTS ON THE
ARAKAN PROBLEM, WHICH, GIVEN THE HIGH DEGREE OF GOVERNMENT
PRESS CONTROL, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TANTAMOUNT TO OFFICIAL
STATEMENTS. ONE FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE ENTITLED "ABSURD
INTERPRETATIONS" WAS A REBUTTAL OF BANGLADESH ACCUSATIONS
CARRIED ON A "FOREIGN RADIO BROADCAST" (A REFERENCE TO
VOA, SEE PARA 2) THAT BURMA HAD COMMITTED MAJOR HUMAN
RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, BURMA'S
ACTIONS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT ARE JUST
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ROUTINE IMMIGRATION CHECKS SUCH AS ARE DONE IN EVERY COUNTRY.
THOSE WHO FLED, IT SAYS DID SO BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN
KNWLEDGE THAT THEIR STATUS IN BURMA WAS ILLEGAL, NOT BECAUSE
ANYONE FORCED THEM TO FLEE. NEITHER DID THE FLIGHT OF PERSONS
HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH RELIGION, THE ARTICLE STATES,
BECAUSE ALL RELIGIONS ARE RESPECTED IN BURMA. THE ARTICLE
ALSO ASSERTS THAT SINCE NOBODY WAS DRIVEN AWAY THERE IS

"NO QUESTION OF TAKING BACK ANYONE". IT CONCLUDES BY CITING VARIOUS SECTIONS OF BURMA'S CONSTITUTION TO SHOW HOW HUMAN RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED. ANOTHER NEWSPAPER HAS BEEN RUNNING A SERIES OF ARTICLES DESIGNED TO PROVE THAT MUSLIMS ARE WELL-TREATED IN BURMA.

2. IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE EMBASSY'S INFORMATION OFFICER THIS MORNING (MAY 10) AND U BA KYAW, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE GOVERNMENT NEWS AND PERIODICALS CORPORATION AND THE AUTHOR OF "ABSURD INTERPRETATIONS", THE LATTER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO A VOA BROADCAST. HE INDICATED THAT THE GUB IS VERY MUCH CONCERNED THAT BANGLADESH IS WINNING THE CAMPAIGN FOR WORLD SYMPATHY AND WAS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, WHICH ONE SIDE DESCRIBED AS BEING A HIGHLY EMOTIONAL TERM. U BA KYAW MADE THE POINT THAT THE GUB HAD TO EXERCISE GREAT RESTRAINT IN WHAT IT SAID SO AS NOT TO INCITE COMMUNAL VIOLENCE AGAINST THE MUSLIM MINORITY. FOR THIS REASON, HE SAID, THERE HAD BEEN NO MENTION OF THE FACT THAT BENGALIS HAD DESTROYED SEVERAL PAGODAS DURING THEIR RAIDS.
BEAN

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Message Attributes

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